

黒の魔王

スパイダへ続く道

III

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FREEDOM
NOVEL

Kuro no Maou

Volume 3 - Arrival of the Crusaders

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Chapter 35 – The Prologue of the 7th

“Welcome to the [White Sacrament] 1st laboratory, Priest Head Ars, no, you are now Senior Priest if I am correct? Congratulations on your promotion.”

“.....No need for sarcasm Bishop Judas.”

Why am I here?

“It’s true that you have become a senior priest, but then again, I guess that was only due to the death of the previous superior.”(judas)

“ You should understand; it is a very cruel condition where someone so young like myself had no choice but to become a senior priest.”(ars)

The two men are talking about something. I know one of them. He is Bishop Judas-sama, a very influential and big person.

I don’t know about the other, but probably, he is also the same.

“This parish does not have the military force to stop another invasion anymore. We need to urgently call reinforcements from the church—“(ars)

“Enough, don’t say anymore. You are not stupid enough to not understand that the parish governed by you has been already abandoned by the church, right?”(Judas)

I wonder what they are talking about.

I cannot understand what they are saying.

“.....are they telling us to die? To be ravaged and killed by that heretic army, is that what they mean!?”(ars)

“So you do understand. Well then, let me ask, why did you come to

meet me now?”(judas)

It's somewhat scary.

To die, to kill, I don't really understand, but I think it is very scary.

“Bishop Judas, you have stayed here even when all the other priests have run away. You are not going to tell me that you are staying in this dangerous place which could be overrun at anytime, just for you research, right?”(ars)

“I see, I see, and?”(judas)

Heretics.....those who don't believe in god. I have never seen them. Just what kind fearsome creatures are they?

“You are a bishop, a rank higher than my own. And on top of it, even the Pope himself has visited this facility. You have many connections in Elysion, no, if I have to say it frankly, you should have the means to maintain the peace of this land, don't you?”(ars)

It was the first time I heard that the Pope has visited here. It's amazing, but, what is it that's amazing? I don't really understand.

“I see. If you use me, you could call for enforcements from the church, is that what you're expecting?”(judas)

“I understand how unreasonable it is, but please. If I am able to drive those heretics away, and a day where this parish once again regains its peace and blessing of god, I will you pay you back with no matter what you ask for. I swear in the name of God.”(ars)

The man bowed his head. He had a big body but somehow he looked pitiable.

“.....umu, alright.” (judas)

“o, ohh, really—“

The man thanked a lot of times. He looks happy, no this is different, this is probably 'being saved'.

“Sariel.” (judas)

“Yes.”

I was surprised to be suddenly called by Bishop Judas-sama.

But, nobody probably realized that I was surprised, after all, everyone says that my face is like that of a doll/puppet.

Rather than laughing, or crying, I have been good at just being silent, yes, from a long time.

“Bishop Judas, that girl is?”(ars)

“The ‘reinforcement’ you wished for. Now, take her with you.”(judas)

The man looked at me with a surprise.

I stared back into his blue eyes.

“.....this is not a funny joke, Bishop Judas.”(ars)

“Sariel, he is Senior Priest Ars, how about you introduce yourself?”(judas)

“Yes, I am——“

I thought for a bit.

My name is not—— anymore, it’s Sariel now.

One who has received the divine protection of God, one of the special 12.

“7th Apostle Sariel.”

I introduced myself with this name for the first time.

“Impossible!? The 7th apostle is Lord Ariel of the [silver judgement]! It is unforgivable to use that name—“(ars)

“Ah ‘that’ is already dead. From now on this Sariel is the new 7th

apostle. She has not yet been appointed officially so she has yet to be awarded a court rank. So no need to put 'Lord' in front of her name when calling her.”(judas)

“An apostle died.....and on top of it, such a young child received the divine protection.....”(Ars)

“Now then, your task is finished right? I still have a lot of research to do.”

As Bishop Judas-sama stood up, he faced me and said.

“Sariel, what is your duty?”(judas)

“Yes, it is to kill the enemies of God.”

“Yes, that is all you need to understand. For everything else, obey Senior Priest Ars' commands.”(judas)

“Understood, Bishop Judas-sama.”

“fu, I guess this would be the last time to be called with a '-sama' by you.”(judas)

It seems when I'll become the 7th apostle, I'll be even above Bishop Judas-sama.

Although I don't understand what will happen then.

“Then, I shall take my leave now. Senior Priest Ars, may you have the protection of God.”

And thus, my first 'duty' began.

Will I be able to do it? Who are the enemies of God? Why am I here? And why am I the only one alive?

I don't know. I don't know anything anymore.

But I know just this.

God will not save me—.

Chapter 36 – Formation of the Crusaders

The west-half of the Arc continent was controlled by the Syncrea Republic. In the port town that was the 5th biggest even among the various huge dominions under the republic, the new Magic Battleship [Gargantia] was anchored.

Built through combining the latest magic techniques, this battleship had scared the spectators, which had come to look at it during its unveiling, through the sheer size of the ship.

Size was always linked with strength. Especially in this different world where ferocious monsters lived, ‘hugeness’ was the easiest proof of strength.

But, not a single emotion could be seen in the eyes of Sariel who was looking at [Gargantia] through the window of a certain room.

For someone who held the strength of an apostle, it was not impossible to sink such a state-of-the-art giant battleship by herself.

No, those shining ruby eyes would not waver no matter what she faced.

That was what the Archbishop known as Ryuchrom (T/N: リュクロ△ suggest a better name) thought silently in his heart.

“Lord Sariel, how is it? The pride of the navy – magic battleship [Gargantia]?”

Sariel moved her sight away from the window and looked towards Ryuchrom.

A tall, slender figure of a handsome young man reflected in her red eyes.

White skin, blonde hair and blue eyes; he possessed the typical features of a resident of the Republic but, every part of his body that made him seemed more perfect than others. Loose wavy blonde

hair along with the marine blue eyes and a sharp nose made him look so beautiful that he might be mistaken for a woman

And when he wore the gorgeously decorated white clothes befitting of an archbishop, anyone who believed in the church would not doubt that he was divine being of god.

That beauty truly held an unparalleled charm. It was on a level where any woman who saw him on the street would instantly become a prisoner of his beauty, but,

“Very big.”(sariel)

What came out of Sariel’s mouth was a very simple thought.

As he himself thought that as expected, even when Sariel was faced with a beauty of his level, there was not even a single trace of emotions in those eyes. In the first place, for Sariel, outer appearance of a person was nothing more than a means to differentiate between people. She had no feelings that could make her judge a person’s beauty or ugliness.

Ryuchrom didn’t know whether this was the [Equality] that was preached by the church or that she simply didn’t possess any emotions at all.

“Is that so? I shall convey it to the officers that Lord Sariel had complimented it.”

Sariel once again returned her gaze outside the window.

Whether those eyes were looking at the battleship, or the port, or maybe the sea, no, it could be that she was looking even beyond the horizon.

(“This lady really never changes. It’s as if the time in her body is not moving. But due to the ‘restraint tool ring’ removed, I can feel an even immense divinity from her.....It seems I’ll end up being ‘charmed’ by her instead.”)

Although have been acquainted in the past, the reason they were both here together was because a new title was added to their

existing [7th Apostle] and [Archbishop].

They were [Crusaders Supreme Commander] and [Crusaders Vice Commander].

The [Crusaders] were an army organised to deal with threats and to realize the will of their god. They were different from the army stationed inside the country.

200 years ago, the Crusaders were set after a large army of heretics had invaded the holy city Elysiön.

(Anyone would think that they were stuck with an unpleasant duty.)

The objective this time to ‘conquer the Pandora continent’ is being currently dissented inside the republic.

The reason is definitely something not humane as ‘opposition against plundering of other people’s land’ but very simple economic reasons.

To make the Pandora continent a land for humans, they first had to exterminate the demons living there. Just how much money and lives would be required to fulfil that task? At the very least, even commoners were aware of the cost that would be incurred just in crossing the sea for a large expedition.

(But, His Highness Cardinal Ars saw this formation of the Crusaders as a chance. Even I think that it’s a disadvantageous gamble but —)

What came into Ryuchrom’s minds were the words spoken by the most trusted man, that is, Cardinal Ars.

“He nominated the 7th Apostle Sariel as the supreme commander of the Crusaders. If acknowledged, the conquest of the Pandora continent is almost certain.”

And the Pope approved of it, and also acknowledged by the Republic’s parliament, Lord Sariel was officially appointed as the Supreme Commander.

“Being told that much, I had no objections anymore.”)

Accepting Ars' idea, Ryuchrom announced candidacy for the post of Vice Commander. There would be no rival candidates that way.

The final total count of the Crusaders stood at 15,000. Historically speaking, it was probably the smallest amount of Crusaders ever.

What that fact meant, Ryuchrom didn't even have to think about it as he spoke to Sariel.

“It will take about 1 week from here to get to Virginia it seems.”

As Sariel looked back, she followed Ryuchrom line of sight towards the map spread upon the table.

Thanks to the help of magic it was possible to make a map as accurate as the ones in present times but the one in front of them was a simple one made with drawn lines.

That implied that accurate distance and details were not available. That was none other than a map of the yet unexplored Pandora continent.

On that Pandora continent, the only place occupied by the Republic was the port town of [Virginia].

The rias coastline that had developed on the east side of the continent made for a natural good harbour, and was thus ideal terrain to be used as a base for travelling between the 2 continents.

“It will take about 1 month to complete the preparations for transporting the 15,000 man army and all other goods.”

During the time when the settlement and establishment of Virginia was started, the invasion of the Pandora continent had already started and the catchphrase –‘Pandora is a paradise filled with riches’ made a lot of dreamers cross the sea to settle there.

Also receiving funds from the country and the church, the establishment of Virginia was proceeding smoothly.

With the development of the port and residential area, in just a half-year Virginia developed from just a fishing village to a proper Port town. And thus after creating a proper base, they finally began the invasion with military strength.

As per the information, the army that departed from Virginia at that time had about 2000 soldiers, and their aim was a fortress city called [Daidalos].

As to why they attacked [Daidalos] which boasted strong defence with just 2000 men, it cannot be known anymore. Because the commander of that army who was also a high ranking knight with a court rank, acted as a part of the vanguard and was tragically annihilated along with his whole unit.

“It’ll be good if Virginia is not destroyed by Daidalos until the preparations here are completed, no, at least till I and Lord Sariel arrive there in 1 week by the Gargantia.”

And the war made by those 2000 men on Daidalos was the reason the Republic was in the state of war at present.

Basically, due to underestimating the ‘army of demons’ of Daidalos, the army took over 1200 casualties which was a crushing defeat in the history of the Republic.

According to the report of the survivors, the Daidalos army had the king, a black dragon, at its head, and included races like Orcs, Werewolves, golems, Cyclops, and others that held much more power than humans. Furthermore, their army was more than 10 times in number. In front of overwhelming strength and numbers, there was nothing that could be done.

After that, Daidalos had put Virginia under a siege but they did not break into the city itself and in few weeks returned back.

Virginia was built as a strong fort thanks to the supply of funds that was still continuing, so the Daidalos army must have found it dangerous to uselessly come close to it.

From then up till now, Daidalos has sent various messengers to

Virginia asking to leave their country, and have deployed scouts to observe the situation.

Virginia has given no response for the past half year. It's only a matter of time before Daidalos resorts to use of strength. That is why Daidalos could march into Virginia before Sariel and Ryuchrom reach there in 1 week.

“Virginia will not fall.”

Sariel said that in a small voice as if she was speaking to herself but it held clear confidence.

“The conquest of Pandora continent is wished by the White God, it shall be accomplished without fail.”(Sariel)

“Yes, it is as you say Lord Sariel.”

That was neither a joke nor façade. As she had said, the conquest of the Pandora Continent was wished by God.

Was the reason why she could say that with such confidence was because she was an Apostle? Or maybe do you reach such a state of mind when you sacrifice yourself to piety?

It was not a problem of faith. It was much simpler. Anyone of the church could understand Sariel's words.

After all, it was literally ‘told by the god himself’.

And it was called an [Oracle].

The oracle that came to the church one year ago was,

“Conquer Pandora continent as a sacrifice.”

And thus the Republic crossed the sea, landed on the Pandora continent and built Virginia.

The Syncrea Republic who has taken the Church as the state religion, the oracle is not something they can ignore. No matter how disadvantageous it may be, they have to fulfil it with the best

of their efforts.

The church has been following the oracles no matter how much difficulty it may bring, without even considering whether it was right or wrong from the very start. And now they had become a faith large enough to possess the whole west half of the Arc continent.

This time, due to the giant army of Daidalos, the conquest of Pandora continent was interrupted and when it seemed that it might stay like that indefinitely, they received the oracle again.

“Conquer Pandora continent as a sacrifice.”

Exactly the same as before, no change in even the words.

Having received the same oracle twice, they could not give up like this anymore. They needed to put in even greater efforts.

If they were to use the whole nation's power, they would be able to conquer the Pandora continent.

But, to the Syncrea republic and the church, rather than a savage backwards land, the Arc continent where they have been living was more important.

They could not just leave the Republic which held half the continent just like that for that would result the decline of the country, and fall in the power of their God.

Due to this thought process, the conquering of the Pandora continent was to be done with force without losing the authority in the Arc continent, was what the church decided as the official opinion towards the [oracle].

(“Will be become the sacrifice for gods, or will we get a miraculous victory and become heroes——“)

No one could predict the result of this oracle.

These 15,000 Crusaders were nothing but proof that the will of the God has been followed, that is, they were simply sacrifices, the

maximum amount of soldiers the Republic could afford to lose.

But still, if the Crusaders led by Sariel break through the Daidalos army, the whole situation would be reversed.

The whole 15,000 man army including Ryuchrom himself were relying on the words of Ars. If they were able to conquer Daidalos, and take the one big step on the Pandora continent, the profits and advantages that will be earned by the top of the Crusaders aka Ars are uncomparable.

The Crusaders have almost no chance of winning, but in exchange, if they won, the returns are amazing.

For Ars it is a big gamble with his life on the line, but only Ryuchrom and the people around him realize this. Ars himself was already assured of victory the moment he put Sariel on the seat of the commander.

(“——the die has been cast already. All I have to do is just give my all to lead the Crusaders to victory.”)

Ryuchrom did not have any regrets. No matter how difficult the situation was, under Ars, he was protected and served him and as a result he became an archbishop today.

It's the same even now. All I have to do is execute Ars' commands, and,

(“Lord Sariel, for the Cardinal Ars that has faith in you, I shall put my faith in you as well.”)

Ryuchrom swore to dedicate all his faith towards Sariel.

And thus, leading the 15,000 Crusaders, 7th Apostle Sariel crossed the seas towards the Pandora continent.

This day, the 4th day of the month of Ryokufuu(Early-summer breeze), was also the fateful day when Kurono met Lily for the first time.

Chapter 37 – The Charisma of an Apostle

In front of the state-of-the-art Magic Battleship [Gargantia] that arrived at the Virginia port, Priest Head Maxwell breathed a sigh.

“An Apostle.....”

One year ago, he was one of the first members to have landed on the Pandora continent.

Being a devout believer of the church, even though he was a Priest Head, he still chose to realize god’s will by participating in the conquest of Pandora continent.

Reaching an unknown continent, he was even attacked by wild monsters, after many hardships established this Virginia, and half year ago even took part in the invasion of Daidalos.

He was presently the person who had contributed the most in the establishment of Virginia. After the death of the Knight Commander, all other high ranking members ran back to the republic and Maxwell ended up becoming the highest ranked church official here.

And being a representative of church meant that he stood at the top of all the people here who were believers of the church as they were the people of the Republic.

And thus, as the representative of Virginia, he was waiting to greet the Apostle Commander of the Crusaders.

On both of his sides stood his young Priest disciples and behind them along with other members of the church were the numerous citizens who were here to catch a glimpse of the messiah-like Apostle.

They were still cheering with joy and were waving their hands towards the giant Battleship.

It was not that Maxwell did not understand their feelings. In front of the fearsome army of demons where they could be attacked any time, a reinforcement of a 15,000 man army had arrived.

The commander of that army was nothing less than a messiah for them.

But, Maxwell was holding a doubt in his mind. Just what kind of person was the Apostle?

The Apostle coming here known as Sariel, was the 7th apostle and a young girl. But that was all he knew.

No matter how young, an Apostle was loved by the god; there was no doubt that they held incredible strength. But that did not imply that they directly control men.

What they possessed was simply combat and fighting strength.

Probably the young Apostle was just an emblem, and the true command will be taken by the second-in-command who would be a high ranking official.

And Maxwell did not believe in 'high-ranking priests and officials'.

In the first place, the ones who abandoned Virginia and ran away were these people. Just that was enough to garner distrust in the higher ups of the church but, Maxwell did not believe in them even before that.

He was also someone who had become a Priest Head. Senior Priests or Bishops who worked in Elysion were what kind of people, he had known from the time he was a child.

In his words, the church's organization was corrupt. Each and every one of them were fools blinded by promotions and success and could only think about using and kicking others down. Bribes were prevalent, and what could be attained only by priest through devotion, faith and practice was now bought with money.

In such a world, Maxwell had already become unable to bear it by the time he earned the title of Priest Head.

He closed his paths to success by himself and threw himself in countless battlefields for the sake of serving God.

And, accepting the precise [oracle] that was received, he unhesitatingly decided to take part in the operations to conquer Pandora continent. There was no way he would ever regret that decision.

The experiences here were painful similar to all other battlefields, but that is the trial set by God. To work towards the will of god as a proper believer was the only job worth doing, or so Maxwell truly believed in his heart.

That is why he held unpleasant feelings thinking that priests drowned in greed had once again arrived in this Virginia, a place for ‘true believers’.

He did not know what were the people who had come were like, but he seriously thought that if they were to use this god’s land for their own selfish desires, then he would erase them.

There is no surveillance in this far away land either so you could kill as many by calling it an accident.

Having resolved that much, Maxwell was standing here to greet the commander.

(“I shall make sure whether you are suitable enough for this land —”)

The wrinkled face that had gone beyond the middle age, grimly warped.

But in that trained body there were no signs of wearing down due to age. Due to the strong keenness of Maxwell, the two disciples also shivered with nervousness.

At that moment, at last, the doors of the Battleship opened. What appeared was a tall and slender youth.

Wavy blond hair and beauty like that of a woman, he could be mistaken for a delicate man but the white robe on his body stole

away all attention.

(“An Archbishop.....at such a young age.....”)

Maxwell could understand that in a single glance. An Archbishop was a rank high enough to be a candidate to become the next Cardinal. It was in a level completely different from a Priest head.

(“Then that means he is the commander, no wait, the commander was supposed to be an Apostle.....”)

The strongest of the church were the Apostles. And an Archbishop was the 3rd highest position if you exclude the Apostles. He could understand one of them but for both to have appeared, Maxwell could not hide his surprise.

His assumption that the aide would be a Senior Priest or a bishop at max was completely overturned.

With the appearance of someone who looked he was so close to heaven, a bead of sweat flowed down Maxwell's forehead. He was envious of his disciples who had yet not realized that the other man was an Archbishop. With elegant actions, the youth who was an Archbishop took the hand of someone behind him and started to come down the ramp.

The one who was lead by him was, yes, none other than the 7th Apostle Sariel.

The pure white majestic appearance was finally exposed in the light.

“Aah——“

At that moment, the port that was filled with cheers and shouts suddenly became completely silent.

White clothes, white skin, white hair, and radiant ruby eyes.

That appearance was something, which could not be painted by any artist, could not be sculpted by any sculptor; it was something truly only a god could create, that shining white beauty.

“—So, beautiful.”

Tears appeared unknowingly in the eyes, just by being captivated by this divine beauty.

Led by the Archbishop, slowly, she came closer.

A feeling that was not attained even when meeting the Pope himself was suddenly born inside, as if he was blessed by the real god himself. A sense of peace, and sufficiency came inside his heart.

Maxwell, knelt down naturally, put both his hands in front of his chest, and took the stance of praying.

“Priest Head Maxwell, right?”

Sariel who had come directly in front of him called out. Even though he had never experienced it, he felt as if he just heard the words of God.

“Yes.”

“You did well protecting Virginia till now. From here onwards, together with the Crusaders, let us fulfil the divine will of God.”

Sariel’s small white hand gently caressed Maxwell’s bowing face.

“Yes! This Maxwell will dedicate his everything in assisting 7th Apostle Lord Sariel!!”

Unable to hold back his tears, still Maxwell strongly replied.

As he had said, he swore in his heart to devote everything for Sariel.

“—“

Sariel was, expressionless, still silent, and then slowly gave a small wave towards the still silent crowd.

At that moment, cheers and cries of joy broke out, and enthusiasm at a fanatical level wrapped the whole of Virginia.

Seeing such a situation, Sariel's eyes still showed no emotion.

After the ring of restraint had been removed, and released from the limiting of powers, similar to 'other Apostles', divine protection filled her body and she held true 'divinity'.

Similar to how objects made after god held power, the beauty of the girl who was loved by God held the power to completely charm any who was a believer of the church.

The stronger the faith then even more so. At this moment, Maxwell had been touched by the power of a real god.

Chapter 38 – Story of a Certain Witch

On the main gates of Virginia stronghold, stood a girl.

The beautiful girl had faint light blue hair like a spring water flowing and had shining gold eyes which were more than enough to charm a person, but her expression looked like absentminded sleepy expression.

The girl wore a tri-cornered hat, and was clad in black clothes. She held a long staff in her hands.

Even if a person from arc continent or pandora continent saw her, they would call her a “witch”.

They are not any different from magicians in terms of class, but the girl’s three-set equipment of a black three-cornered hat, black robe along with a long staff is commonly called as “witch”.

The stories about witches are too much famous, everyone will at least know one fairy-tale that is related to witches.

That girl didn’t had any business at the stronghold, rather she was going away from the stronghold.

The gatekeeper of the main gate called out to the leaving girl.

“Young Miss, the long-awaited crusaders finally came here, and you’re going to step down here?”

The girl stops, and nods towards the gatekeeper.

“Speaking of “Apostle”, it is the strongest soldier that the church boasts of, along with that the archbishop who is also taking command of the 15,000 elite forces. The mercenaries will go along the flow of victory and win this war, isn’t it?”

He did not participate in the previous Daidalos invasion, so he probably did not know the fearsomeness of the demon army.

But, the girl had no interest in pointing it out because the words said by him were plenty enough to be agreeable.

The consequence of the previous invasion was due to them underestimating the demon army, they were all in a terrible state though the girl didn't bear a single scratch.

But this time, they had arranged plenty of good military forces for counter attacking tactics.

It took nearly one month, but finally the reinforcements of 15000 soldiers and the provisions along with various other things assembled in Virginia.

The outcome of war couldn't be predicted even by the girl, but they would certainly be able to fight a lot better than the previous war.

The people who came to pandora continent as mercenaries, will get desperate to display their powers to receive a huge amount of reward.

If the mercenaries ran away during the defeat in previous invasion then it was fine, but for them to run away during the time of winning streak is difficult to think of due to their personalities.

At least, the gatekeeper did not think that the girl was running away from here due to her fear of battle.

That is because, if she wanted to escape, she could've gone to the harbour to board the ship bound to her country as the priests did half a year ago, but going towards the pandora land is not the way of thinking of a person trying to run away.

“Are you really going out?”

The girl once again nods.

The gatekeeper thought, though the girl has half-opened sleepy eyes, her decision was rather solid.

“Is that so, where are are you going? do you have a place in mind?”

The girl replies with constant expression.

“A place where food is more delicious.”

The gatekeeper sees off the girl while thinking “as expected the witches are different from normal people.”

The next day, was the day the 15000 crusaders lead by Sariel departed towards Daidalos.

Chapter 39 – The Dragon King

The king stood up from the throne, upon hearing the report of 15000 mercenaries departing from Virginia.

The name of the king is Gaevinal, at a glance he looks like a strong build human in his prime having 2 metres of body height, but in truth he is a genuine dragon.

The dragon are a race having large amount of Physical strength magical energy, and are completely different from other races. Among them the dragons with strongest strength called as “black dragons” is the tribe of Gaevinal.

Even among the dragons who are fundamentally individualists, Gaevinal had the ambition to rule over everything just like the ancient emperor who had once made the great empire that had governed pandora continent in his generation.

In the midst of implementing his ambition, the thing concerning him the most is the city-state “Spada” that extends after crossing the “Gallahad mountain range” which is governed by the sword king “Leonhart” who has the equal strength as him. [ET: the author is a copycat in names. Should go to school.]

He had not even thought of the human army coming to invade by crossing all the way over the seas.

However,

“Despite of giving them the warnings to that extent, they still send out the soldiers.....they are more foolish than what I had thought.”

“It is too much of a hassle, let’s send them out of Pandora continent but not to their hometown, but to hell.”

Now that they have once again risen against Daidalos, Gaevinal was not going to just be happy with making them leave the country anymore, he decided to completely annihilate Virginia.

But soon things would turn out like this, was even predicted by the

top brass of Daidalos along with Gaevinal.

That is because of the report of large ships coming in and out, consisting of large amounts of humans and goods.

It was obvious that in near future, humans would not accept the demand for evacuation and come with counter offensive tactics.

The reason, why they didn't obstruct the arrival of ships to Virginia was because Daidalos doesn't have a navy force. Even without it, if the humans gather many number of people and start attacking first, it will be easy to kick them around or so Gaevinal was thinking.

Starting from dragon, the daidalos army was being organised with the beast men who were similar to monsters as the main force.

The assault by the means of strong offensive ability and mobility were the strong forte of the Daidalos Army. The humans cannot defeat it with even with tens of thousands of soldiers on plain fields.

Therefore, no matter how much military force Virginia has, as long as they strike first, daidalos can intercept it as many times.

Normally, their base point Virginia would also be destroyed, but as it is a stronghold which boasts a solid defence, they need to have determination to suffer some losses.

The Daidalos army was unparalleled on the field but if they are unable to show their mobility to full extent, it would be difficult to end a castle siege war in short time and would become a weakness.

As a result, Virginia's base has great defensive ability but no offensive ability, in the current situation to reduce the loss the most good idea would be to intercept them through a blockade and stop their advance.

To Gaevinal the enemies were not the humans from Virginia but the city-state army of Spada.

Considering the invasion by Spada in near future, Gaevinal wanted to avoid dissipation of war potential.

Gaevinal thought that the defense corps of Daidalos are more than enough for intercepting the humans, though it will leave the anxiety about future.

But in the end, before I went ahead leading the army to Spada, the humans had started to invade.[ET: This author can't seem to maintain a single tense or perspective. right now its first-person perspective.]

If I was not here, the humans might have fought a bit better, but for them to strike at such a timing, the bad luck of humans is hilarious .

Either way, it is impossible for the likes of human to defeat Daidalos.

“So the, shall we go.”

Gaevinal headed towards the main gate of imperial palace.

Below him, 20000 soldiers in black armor and helmet had already been gathered and were waiting to get the order for departure.

“From now, we will head to defeat the foolish humans, don't let a single one return back alive——”

Gaevinal transformed from the temporary human form to his original dragon form.

“——Advance Forward!”

Along with the roar, the advance order is given, the 20000 daidalos soldiers start marching like an avalanche.

Gaevinal who has transformed into a giant dragon with jet black scales, flaps both his wings, while creating a sudden gust of winds soars up in the sky.

The subordinate flying dragons that were already in the air, started following Gaevinal and flew away with him.

The place they were heading for is, the halfway point between Daidalos and Virginia, the Goldran hilly area.

The dragons swore for a certain victory and roared which echoed in the whole Daidalos and headed towards the territory of the decisive battle.

Chapter 40 – Decisive Battle

Goldran Hill

The crusaders, finally completing the invasion strategy departed on the seventh day of the month Distant Thunder.

The elite corps of 15000 men selected by Cardinal Ars, being lead by Sariel.

The crusaders camped in Goldran Hills near guard point with good visibility.

During the previous invasion they suffered defeat by the hands of Daidalos here and the place has some shady history in itself, but there is no better place than this to march forward in full power along with 15000-strong corps.

The Daidalos will also decide this place for the decisive battle like the previous time, as in this hilly region they can display their maximum mobility war potential.

Thus, both the Crusaders and Daidalos army would meet each other at Goldran Hills.

Both parties arrange their battle formation, and it becomes a competition of glaring at each other.

“—I’m entrusting command authority to you, Archbishop Liuchrome.”

Sariel gives a command while sitting on top of pure white pegasus.

“Yes, acknowledged.”

Liuchrome bows down his head. On his beautiful face there is no tension from commanding an army of 15000 men or the fear of the upcoming battle, a kind expression floats on his face.

“I will the rest to you.”

“Yes, please leave it to me.”

With just that much of conversation, Sariel moves her pegasus with an aim towards the front lines.

The pegasus stands up like a long spear lining up, and calmly takes off.

The soldiers look at the lovely girl not fit to be on battlefield while catching their breaths.

Soon after, the soldiers start moving towards the frontlines.

Some steps behind was Maxwell armed with a large mace following them.

On his back, is a large white coffin larger than his back itself.

But as if not caring about its weight, Maxwell starts walking after Sariel in an intimidating manner.

Several steps in front of the front line, Sariel and Maxwell see the black demon race army standing in a line seeming like castle walls.

Looking at that scene, Sariel speaks in her normal manner without any hesitation.

“An army of demons...”

The voice of the slender Sariel is heard by both parties consisting of more than 35000 men clearly word by word.

“Our white God is generous.

However, the Evil Demon Dragon King must be condemned with death.

We will take the head of evil dragon. If you all swear to obey God, he will forgive you even if you're the demon races.”

As soon as she stopped speaking, a sudden of wind blew through the Goldran Hills.

“I am the Daidalos Dragon King. Gaeevinal.”

A jet black dragon leading a swarm of flying dragons flies down from midair.

From between the the dragons, a dragon extending to 40 metres in stature flies down on his two legs in an intimidating manner.

Behind him spreads two dark wings seeming like a night sky with crescent moon, and his fat tail which looks like a large serpent strikes the ground.

Upon looking at his majestic appearance, the soldiers of the Crusaders gasped. The people who participated in the previous invasion are reminded of their unpleasant defeat and start to tremble.

“For the pitiful humans who worship the white God to taunt us, it really is unforgivable.”

The atmosphere begins trembling, and inside Gaevinal’s mouth a large amount of magical power starts concentrating.

“Perish, humans.”

The inherent magic “Dragon Breath” that the dragons are so proud of and hides great destructive power.

An ominous dark red torrent of light is directed straight at Sariel.

“Light wing God’s Shield – Arulks.Aegis.”

The moment when they’re engulfed by the atrocious light, Maxwell sees the figure of Sariel being wrapped up in wings of an angel.

Zuzunn

Along with a thundering roar, a dense black smoke rises and covers the surrounding area.

Immediately a gust of wind blows away the smoke.

Beyond that stood Sariel in the same position from before with shining white body

“.....I’ll go.”

She speaks in small voice as always, Maxwell standing beside Sariel after seeing her defence magic block the attack. He replies in a strong voice while putting down the large coffin from his back.

“Your Excellency, may the fortune of war favor you!”

Sariel nods, and holds the coffin.

“‘Armed scriptures’ – Release.”

At that moment the the coffin is wrapped in a white light and scatters.

From within a long white spear in the imitation of the cross which is the symbol of God appears.”

“Holy Cross spear ‘Grand Cross’.”

The one of the two magical weapons only apostles can use are called “armed scriptures”.

The fact that the armed scripture is a spear proves that rather than a magician, Sariel’s true class is a Holy Knight Paladin.

The 7th Apostle Sariel takes the long pure white spear ‘The Holy Cross spear’ in her hands and storms towards Gaevinal on her pegasus

“oOOOO”

The roar of Gaevinal which trembles heaven and earth, signals the start of war.

Sariel cuts through the vanguard and storms, the 15000 Crusaders also march forward.

In contrast, the Daidalos army hailing Geavinal’s roar, also starts

the assault.

Here, the head on collision between the Daidalos army and the Crusaders opens its curtains.

Chapter 41 – Human and Demon

In the Pandora continent, other than Elf or Dwarf, Goblins, Orcs, Golems and other races similar to monsters also coexisted with the humans. But with the same appearance, those that lived according to their instincts like the stray goblins were categorized as monsters.

For the residents of Pandora, rather than appearance, the ability to understand others, intelligence, and reasoning was more important. But in the Arc continent ruled by humans, especially the region ruled by the church, ‘whether you are human or not’ was more important.

In the first place, even if it was the same human race, but their God was different, they would call each other heretics and start killing each other. If they didn’t allow a different faith, permitting a totally different race was completely impossible for the current Church at least.

And thus the word [Demons] was born, a word that put monsters and different races together without any distinction.

For those who believed in the church, [Demons] were the same as monsters and had no problems in killing them. In fact they were happy to have killed the ‘enemies of god’.

So, with this over discriminatory ideology, the Daidalos invasion was done half a year ago.

Officially, that was the first time the humans of Syncrea Republic fought with the demons of Daidalos.

But the battle between the 2000 knights and Daidalos defensive forces was not something that could be called a ‘battle’. They were knights in name only. All they could think of was to cross the walls of Daidalos and take their gold for themselves. Truly a bandit-like thinking. Thus they underestimated the demons and therefore there

attacking style was also similar to bandits.

But it was different this time.

With the Apostle and the Archbishop at the head, there was a proper chain of command and the soldiers under them were not people who had crossed the seas to earn riches but they were devout believers who were here to offer this land to their God as their duty.

Here onwards, the true strength of the army of the Syncrea Republic that controlled half of the Arc Continent was shown while fighting the demons.

In the sky, the 7th Apostle Sariel and the Dragon King Gaevinal faced each other, and on the ground, the 15,000 Crusaders clashed with the 20,000 man army of Daidalos.

“——Hold your formations!! Hold them until Her Excellency kills the evil dragon no matter what!!”(T/N:- Her excellency is used for Sariel here by Maxwell.)

Handing over the Armament Scripture and seeing off Sariel, Maxwell was fighting in the front row of the army.

The [Formation] the he spoke of was the tactics humans came up with to surpass the Demons.

Humans and Demons both used the same language, and fought wearing armour and swords in their hands.

But there was a clear distinction in the fighting style of the two.

The most striking distinction was seen during massive group battles like this time.

Demons who were fundamentally stronger in terms of physical ability as well as magical energy, put emphasis on individual strengths. During team battles that involved few number of people, some level of coordination was possible but in a group that had more than 100 people, they had no way to lead and command such a big army easily.

No, in the first place, fighting in such big groups was already beyond their way of thinking.

That is why, even Gaevinal who had built up a country, without trying to command his 20,000 subordinates, challenged Sariel to a one-on-one battle. Gaevinal who did not know humans other than those already living in the Pandora continent, thought that even humans would not find it abnormal.

That is because it was normal for the strongest to become king and during wars it was also normal for the Commanders to face-off each other in a one-on-one battle.

That is why he did not doubt the fact that Sariel was facing him alone.

But, in the world of humans where it was not necessary for the strongest to become the king, one-on-one battles were nothing more than a source of entertainment.

After all, for the commander who is meant to control the army to go and face the enemy commander alone was in no way logical. Because in human wars, the one who becomes the commander of the army is not the strongest but the one with the highest commanding abilities.

Of course, there are many generals who themselves are also strong but then they also have brilliant commanding capabilities as well.

Thus, though Sariel was the Supreme Commander of the Crusaders, for her to fight with the enemy commander after giving all commanding authority to the vice commander Liuchrome, was simply a clever strategy.

Whereas, the only directions the 20,000 man army had were – attack, defend and retreat, just those three.

Similar to this time, as long as the king gave the order to attack, all they had to do was just assault with full strength, and even though it's called assault, all they did was that every individual just charged towards the enemy.

The only time they will withdraw would be when either their king dies or they clearly become disadvantageous.

Basically, the battles done by demons depended on the individual strength of each soldier and that's it.

But, humans were not the same.

In this different world, magic existed, and beings like Sariel with overwhelming strength also existed.

But the rest was fundamentally similar to how things were in Kurono's original world.

Alone, humans had lesser strength than wild animals, but with wisdom and working in groups, they reached the top of the food chain.

Here, the culture may be at the level of Middle-ages, but the humans were similar to Kurono's original world. Strategy and tactics were used always.

So, the best one to battle huge numbers was to use [formations].

In the current battle, the reason why the Crusaders were able to deal with the attack of the Dem9ons who were stronger as well as had 5000 more soldiers, was due to the use and deployment of [formations] developed through heavy training and accurate commands.

“ثلاثاء نار متقدة عصا الشعلة سبيرز بيرس—— Chanting complete, firing!”

“Now, do it!! Flame spear – Ignis Crisagita!!”

Standing in a single straight line, the troop of magicians wields their staffs and fire magic.

To buy time for them to complete the chants, they were protected by the soldiers wielding long spears.

The army of Daidalos was burnt with the simultaneous firing of the fire magic – Flame spear – Ignis Crisagita. On top of it, a rain of

arrows was launched as a finishing blow.

“Shit! They are still alive! Those damned monsters!!”

Burnt with fire, stabbed with arrows, yet they swung their swords but they were finally killed after being pierced by the long-spear wielding soldiers.

Their incredible life force was clearly made visible, but still that was not enough to break through the solid defence of the united Crusaders.

In these front lines of the war, the Daidalos army was being suppressed by the [Square formation].

No matter which direction they are attacked from, they would be able to deal with it. Although it lacked mobility, it made up with the overwhelming defensive ability.

This square formation was made of spear troops, bow troops and the magic troops, these 3.

The spears used were Pikes that were 6m long pole type weapons which were used in the Arc continent as the Anti-cavalry weapon.

It was currently playing a major role in intercepting the Daidalos army infantry that showed assault strength similar to an actual heavy cavalry.

These spear troops were densely packed in the square along with Long Bow and cross bow users as well as long range magic users.

If Kurono had seen this deployed square, he would have thought that it was similar to the [Spain Square](#). If these magic warriors were replaced with musketeers, it will be exactly same as the Spain square.

Of course, in a world where magic existed, magicians did not just replace musketeers with same strength but also possessed ability enhancing Boost magic and restorative Heal magic, truly an all-purpose support unit.

But still, even though the soldiers and magicians of the Crusaders were able to draw out their maximum strength and were fighting hard, they were still one-sidedly defending against the extremely powerful Daidalos army.

Even if demons were unaware of formations, against their individual strength and their larger numbers, even with the defensive strength of the square formation, holding them back temporarily was the most they could do.

“Lord Sariel, please grant upon us a miracle.....”

The Archbishop and the vice commander of the Crusaders, Liuchrome looked towards the sky where Sariel was in fight to the death with the Dragon King and quietly whispered.

Both Ars and Liuchrome had liberated an area at the border of the Syncrea Republic where Heretics had run rampant once. That achievement was recognised, and Ars became Cardinal and he became an Archbishop at a very young age.

The experience of attaining victory against heretics of Liuchrome was clearly seen in this battle against these demons as well. But even with experience and brilliant commanding skills along with the elite 15,000 Crusaders, Liuchrome was still did not have the strength to win against the immense strength of the Daidalos army.

To lead the Crusaders to victory, it was necessary to slay the commander of Daidalos, the Dragon King Gaevinal.

The Crusaders were currently struggling, no, they were inferior. The one able to overturn this condition was only Sariel, and again the only one who could face the dragon king alone was only the 7th Apostle Sariel.

Will the Crusaders achieve glorious victory or will they face a tragic loss, what will be their fate, all had been entrusted to the small white girl called Sariel.

Chapter 42 – Apostle vs. Dragon

At the hill of Goldran currently, the Crusaders were barely holding against the Daidalos army by deploying square formations at the ground, and in the air the Pegasus knights were holding down the flying dragon troops.

And even above the sky where the Pegasus knights were fighting dragons, far above the clouds, the 7th Apostle and the Dragon King were facing off against each other.

Under the sunlight existed the clear blue sky but only above Goldran hill, the sky was burning in black and white.

“oooooooo!!!”

Dark red, sinister light of destruction, Gaevinal’s Dragon Breath burnt the air.

“[Light wing god’s shield – Alarux Aegis]”

The wings of angel holding white shine covered Sariel and stopped the nth breath once again.

The Heaven-class secret skill that surpassed the highest advance magic rank – [God’s shield – Aegis] was able to take on almost any magic used by humans without getting damaged at all.

But taking the breath of the giant black dragon head-on countless times, it was finally destroyed.

“[Sonic Walker]”

Before the breath could reach her, Sariel jumped above from the Pegasus she was riding.

Even though she should have started free falling, she clearly stepped on the air.

Sariel ran in the sky. Closing on to the dragon king while releasing the silver aura at full strength, she looked like a meteor.

This speed that could not be even seen by normal eyes and advancing threateningly in mid air was the effect of Sage-class martial art [Sonic Walker].

But Gaevinal's burning red eyes could clearly catch her figure that was closing in.

He swung his giant tail towards her. Although it was a simple movement, but that tail was similar to a moving castle wall.

The tail that was covered with scales, that were considered the hardest among all living things, was harder than an actual rampart.

If that tail was swung like a whip at the speed of sound, how many magicians would it take to cast enough defensive magic to stop something like that?

Moving at high-speed in mid-air, Sariel focused all her magical energy and concentration on the coming attack. Using the [God's shield Aegis] again was not possible. So she decided to make use of her speed to evade it.

The incoming hard attack was seen through with the help of over enhanced dynamic vision and sixth-sense that had become closer to foresight.

The storm-like destructive tail passed through the place where Sariel's lower body was before she moved.

As her silver hair fluttered she evaded the attack and then shortened the distance between them. In response, Gaevinal had already moved to his next attack.

Large claws that were bigger than any sword attacked Sariel.

Holding unbelievable sharpness that could rip apart the body with the touch of his fingertips, those claws were not only hard and sharp but were clearly also infused with an Extra magic that increased the attack range. But, Sariel dodged it with a paper thin

difference. Gaevinal had clearly ended up allowing her to come close to his bosom. At last, he had come in range of Sariel's holy cross spear – Grand Cross.

“[Moonlight – Lunalux]”

Physical strength, magical energy, concentration power, enhancing every ability to the highest with [Faust Berserk], and then enhancing them even further with [Lunalux].

Invocation time is a mere 1 second but it uses up energy even more than 10 normal magicians combined instantly. And, in the instant the magical energy is used, Sariel released her attack that could be literally said to be her sure-kill move, a move only those who could use a part of 'God' can utilise, the ultimate martial art.

“—[God's Spear – Brionac.]”

From the point of the Grand Cross, dazzling white light overflowed.

That light was divine and beautiful, yet it had the same level of destruction quality as the dragon breath.

The [Brionac] released by Sariel with her full strength, its edge that was shining with white light aim was the heart of the dragon.

Uptill now, no matter which shield or wall it was faced with, the God's spear had pierced through but at this moment, it lost the title of 'sure-kill move'.

(“Hard——can't pierce through any further——“)

The scales that were called the hardest, the steel like flesh, and the carious divine protections as the Dragon King; the [Brionac] pierced through it all yet at the end it could not reach the heart.

Pulling out the spear, before blood could burst through that wound,

“Gooaaaah!!!”

“nn——“

Due to Gaevinal's giant roar, Sariel's small body was blown away like a leaf.

Thrown away in mid air, Sariel quickly corrected her stance and as if she was already waiting for it, she landed on the Pegasus.

Sariel rode on her Pegasus and Gaevinal had blood flowing from his chest. Both took distance from each other again.

"To have been able to inflict an injury upon me.....human girl, name yourself."

With just Gaevinal's words, the air trembled. Any feeble person would have instantly fainted with just that.

Sariel, even under that pressure, remained expressionless and answered.

"7th Apostle Sariel."

Similar to how she had once named herself in front of Kurono.

"Hou, the same name as the ancient angel of god? You have a strong light as your name suggests as well——"

Taking a deep breath, and at the same time, the bleeding from the chest stopped, and the wound quickly closed up.

"Sariel, you are someone worthy of being my opponent in a long time. From here onwards, I shall also use my full strength——"

Acknowledging Sariel as someone worthy of fighting against with all his strength, Gaevinal released a tremendous roar.

And then, on the scales as black as the night itself, red lines started to appear. His dark body was coloured with sinister red lines and Gaevinal released magical energy, vitality, fighting spirit, and thirst for blood ——Powers that could be felt directly with the body, everything had been doubled and become thicker.

Even Sariel, faced with that enormous presence, her beautiful thin eyebrows turned into a scowl.

("I might die.....")

How many years has it been, Sariel thought to herself.

From the moment she started taking experiments to become an 'Apostle', she had lost the feeling of death.

But, numerous modifications, enhancements, at the end of experiments, she had finally become an Apostle worthy of having the divine protection of the White God, and from that moment onwards, she had become an existence like a 'dragon', far away from death.

As the 7th Apostle, Sariel had participated in numerous wars, disputes, rebellions in the Arc continent.

But as the strongest existence of the church, an [Apostle], Sariel faced no opponent that could actually threaten her life.

When she was ambushed, made to retreat, betrayed by allies, surrounded by enemies on all sides, in every setting where the army would resolve for death, Sariel never thought that she would die.

An Apostle was such a transcendental existence.

But right now, at this moment, Sariel felt death. The black-red dragon king in front of her was stronger than any enemy she had ever faced.

Even if she won, how many wounds would she take? Maybe she might become unable to fight ever again.

But still, without any fear, she set up her spear.

For her, death was not the absolute fear.

After all, she had abandoned something like survival instincts a long time ago. She had attachments to this world. All she had was the 'duty' to complete as an Apostle.

That was her *raison d'être*.

Thus even if she was slaughtered by the dragon king here, even if she didn't have enough strength, she did not care about anything else.

As long as she was alive, she would fulfil her duty as an Apostle.

“.....En Garde.”

Hardening her resolve, Sariel faced Gaevinal in his true form—

“Come, human with the name of an Angel!”

And thus the battle between the two strongest existences had begun.

Chapter 43 – The Dragon Slaying Angel

—This is it.

Liuchrome who was commanding the battle instinctually realized.

Although the front line had yet to collapse, Liuchrome had already received reports that many square formations had been destroyed.

Up till now, before a square formation got destroyed, Liuchrome would send reserve soldiers that were waiting in the rear to prevent it from happening. But now even that reserve had become empty. Only the heavy cavalry unit required in the ‘final push’ was left to him.

Liuchrome was not stupid enough to haphazardly send the cavalry. If it was for assault he would have considered but it was defence. Using cavalry for retreating was basically using the troops in exactly opposite of their actual forte.

Heavy cavalry who are clad in full plate armour are an extremely powerful troop. On top of it they were the elites of the Temple Knights. Their ability was not to be doubted.

But, cavalry’s biggest strong point is mobility and offensive ability. For example, when the opponent is at a disadvantageous position, if they have to intercept a charge from the flank by the cavalry as well, the enemy would be definitely slaughtered. Basically, if you use Cavalry with accurate timing, you could achieve victory instantly.

But, if the timing is messed up instead, the losses will not be laughable.

And if they were destroyed once, they didn’t have any reserves for them either.

The horses they use along with their armour, compared to a soldier,

the cost and time incurred to raise one cannot be even compared with each other.

Neither are they useful only in certain situations but they are also too valuable to use recklessly.

Thus, every famous commander in the history of the Arc continent read the flow of the battlefield first and then used these troops to display their maximum strength.

Liuchrome was not as talented as those famous commanders, but he knew the usability of each troop and did not lose calm when faced with a disadvantageous situation.

His outer appearance was certainly unique, but inside he was rational, and someone who could take calm and reliable decisions. That is why Ars chose him from among all his subordinates because he believed that Liuchrome could deliver the desired result.

And now, Liuchrome had realized faster than anyone else that if the current flow continued, the Crusaders would be definitely annihilated.

Therefore, before he has to face the worst situation, he decided it would be better to retreat for now.

To order the Crusaders, who are here to fulfil the will of god, was not an easy task for a mediocre commander at all.

They cannot step back, neither they had any plans, thus there was no choice but sacrifice the Crusaders while wishing the God for a miracle. A mediocre commander could only take the above action.

And then God will grant a miracle to such a fool with a heart full of compassion; Liuchrome understood that such a thing would never happen.

A miracle is called a miracle because it is not meant to happen. Depending on such things was the same as accepting defeat from the start, Liuchrome thought so from the very bottom of his heart. That is why the ones who lead an army to victory were none other than the humans themselves that were fighting there.

And in such a position where they were about to lose, it was his duty to save as many soldiers as possible. Liuchrome was about to order the retreat, at that very moment,

GUOOOOOOOOO——

With a roar able to shake the heavens, a giant black object fell from the skies.

It was crashing directly near the front lines where both the armies were clashing.

At this moment both armies stopped their hands and quickly ran in all directions in order to save themselves.

The thing that was falling finally crashed on the Goldran hill that was already painted with blood.

It's identity was known by everyone here, but they did not realize it until it had actually fallen to the ground.

It was a giant black dragon.

The wings that could create a storm with just flapping were torn to pieces, the feet that made the earth tremble and the hands which had claws that could cut through anything had been completely severed from the body and incredible wounds could be seen.

The tail that was like the wall of a castle had also been severed and was nowhere to be found, the fortress like body itself was filled with places where the scales had been destroyed or torn off and the whole body was stained with blood.

And the burning fire-like eyes had less shine than a worn out ruby. Everyone there understood that the life of this giant body was running out.

The thing that had fallen from the skies was none other than the corpse of Dragon King Gaevinal.

Nobody noticed that on the forehead of this giant dragon king's body, a single shadow was there.

A cross spear that had penetrated deeply into the forehead, and the one who held it was a girl wearing a bloodstained robe.

It had become so dark red in colour that it was unknown whether it was due to blood spurts or was it her own blood. Her beautiful silver hair was also covered in red and had lost its original splendour. She was missing her right arm and maybe because her right eye had been crushed, it was closed as tears of blood flowed down.

But, she was clearly standing while sticking the spear in the corpse of the dragon king. The open left eye held a brilliant red shine and showed that she was still alive.

The girl was Sariel.

Each every one that fought here witnessed the legend of a single human defeating a dragon born in front of them.

“—It’s an Angel.”

Someone muttered.

“The Angel defeated the dragon.”

Angel, there were various explanations about their identity but the words that had been raised here was the common belief of everyone standing here.

“Aah, how beautiful.”

Wet with blood and entrails, having lost the right arm and right eye, even then, the figure of the girl firmly holding the spear in her hands was to each and every soldier of the Crusaders, the most beautiful thing that they had ever seen.

A scene so vivid, that they would never ever forget it in their whole lives.

But, for the Daidalos army what did the girl look like, at least, it was not the same as the Crusaders.

Sariel defeated Gaevinal, that incredibly unbelievable fact was understood by each and every one on the Goldran hill.

But the feeling they held in their hearts was not excitement of being able to see a legend; it was the shock of the death of the unparalleled dragon.

In either case, it was big enough to make all of them forget to even move.

And the one who recovered the fastest among them was Liuchrome.

Facing the dazed subordinates standing there, he raised his voice and proclaimed thus,

“Behold! The great 7th Apostle Her Excellency Sariel has slain the evil Dragon King! Now is the time, when we shall annihilate the evil army of demons! All troops attack!!”

The order of attack made by Liuchrome clearly resounded. Confident of their victory, the Crusaders picked up their weapons, shouted, and charged. They faced the Daidalos army that had completely lost their fighting spirit in front of the fact that the undefeatable dragon king had been killed.

“Hurry, rescue Her Excellency Sariel. Also, give the first heavy cavalry unit to attack—“

At last the moment of reversal had come. This was the only time when their less numbered army could annihilate the strong Daidalos army. With this in his mind, Liuchrome quickly gave out orders one after another.

Currently, the difference between the numbers of soldiers between the two armies on the Goldran hill, compared to the start, was in the same ratio. In fact, due to maintaining the formations, the Crusaders were at a disadvantage.

Although the enemy had lost their commander, if they instantly counter attacked, it will turn into a battle of attrition and in the end, the Crusaders would lose.

But, at this moment, it was a situation where the difference in morale would decide the outcome.

The Crusaders who were about to lose their front line, regained their spirit and confidence in victory with Sariel's accomplishment, and launched a counter attack.

And what Liuchrome was aiming for was the realisation of the tactic, known in the warring states period as [Norikiri]. (T/N: Norikiri is a tactic where units of five to ten horsemen rode into the enemy to stir confusion)

Launching the cavalry against the restless enemy, it was a tactic meant to quickly destroy them, the easiest to use as well as the most reliable tactic.

And this was the only time where the much awaited [Norikiri] could be used.

Against this, the Daidalos army who had been unable to regain their fighting spirit had fallen into confusion.

Losing their king, whether to fight, to run, or to retreat; they were unable to take any of those decisions were faced with the Crusaders that were in the best form now.

And finally, the silver heavy cavalry troop that had received enhancement support from the magicians began their lance charge to decide the outcome of this battle.

In front of the white army, unable to do nothing more than individually try and defend themselves, the fate of the Daidalos army had been decided.

This battle that would be later known as the Battle of Goldran, ended with the magnificent victory of the Crusaders.

Three days later, on the 10th day of the month of Enrai (Distant Thunder), the Crusaders completely captured the capital Daidalos.

Chapter 44 – Meeting of Apostles

The church headquarters, [Holy ElySION Cathedral], was located in the holy city ElySION. In its deepest part, where a conference room exclusively for high ranking clergymen was made, out of 12, 6 Apostles had gathered.

There were Apostles that stayed and served in ElySION as well as those that were deployed to far away fronts like Sariel. Thus it was rare for all 12 to assemble at the same time. At the same time, that also implied that war never ended on this Arc continent.

The Apostles that had gathered today were the 2nd and 5th, that resided in ElySION, as well as the 3rd, 4th, 11th, and 12th, who had just returned.

“——The conquest of Pandora continent, will be continued to be entrusted to the 7th Apostle Sariel.”

The one who was acting as the speaker of this meeting, the 2nd Apostle Abel, declared this.

With the magnificent victory of the Crusaders at Goldran, every noble and church had started sending reinforcements there. Still, Abel declared that they will not be sending another Apostle there.

“You seem displeased, 11th Apostle Lord Misa.”

Sensing everyone’s reactions, Abel spoke to Misa who clearly seemed dissatisfied.

“Sariel was seriously injured while fighting that dragon called Gaevinal right? And it will take time to restore the destroyed parts, not to mention that it’ll take at least one month if she sleeps in the [coffin].”

Out of all the apostles gathered here, Abel and 3 others were dressed in clothes that hid their faces and barely showed any skin.

But Misa's attire, let alone the face, even the shoulders and legs were clearly exposed from the modified robe that she wore.

Misa had a cute face which still retained its youthfulness, a face that would suit a 17yr old bishoujo. From the point of view of the strict clergy, the high exposure level of her body would have been rage inducing, and the modified robe further highlighted her beautiful feminine body line to top it off.

From the tiara worn on her light pink hair, her whole body was decorated with shining ornaments, but rather than making her look overly dressed up, they only supported her sublime beauty. In fact, the shine of the numerous jewels seemed to be overshadowed in front her.

"I agree. Being unable to move for 1 month would be dangerous for both Lord Sariel and the Crusaders as well."

After Misa's words, 12th Apostle Mariabelle also spoke.

She was also not wearing dresses that hid the face like Misa. With blonde hair and blue eyes similar to his older brother Archbishop Liuchrome, he possessed beauty that could make someone mistake him for a young girl. However, his long straight hair different from his brother's natural wavy hair was worth mentioning as well.

"Certainly, if another army possessing strength equal to that of Gaevinal's were to attack, the Crusaders would definitely be annihilated. But, such level of opposition has not yet been confirmed. Also we are talking about the cautious Archbishop Liuchrome here; he won't try something stupid as launching another attack without proper plans from Daidalos. And above all, currently reinforcements are being sent one after the other to Pandora, the military would soon be restored to its full strength."

"Reinforcements, is it? Are you not perhaps mistaking thirsty hyenas for reinforcements?"

"You are taking your words too far, 11th Apostle Lord Misa."(abel)

Abel warned her a little, but, Misa didn't show any signs of remorse.

“You should also know that they are nothing more than a group of thieves who are blinded by greed; they are simply scum who take pleasure in looting and massacring. They won’t make up for a good fighting force.”

Although Misa scorned the reinforcements from the church and the nobles that had been given the name of Crusaders as well, Abel also understood her opinion so decided not to object it anymore.

“Lord Misa, although I can’t fully accept your opinion, even I don’t think that these reinforcements would obediently listen to our orders. My brother is a brilliant commander on top of being a clergyman but, to keep such a large number of people in control, the power of an Apostle is necessary.”(mariabelle)

Even though these two had been clearly against the decision, Abel showed no signs of changing his decision.

“Both of your opinions have truth in them, but I still cannot authorize the deployment of an Apostle. Currently, the power required to conquer the whole Pandora continent has been secured. Certainly, the ones going to Pandora are the private armies of nobles and the church, and looting will also occur obviously, there would be even many fights among themselves over fortunes as well. But still, the numbers accumulated are more than enough to conquer Pandora. The only problem left is how to ‘divide the cake’. Such pointless battles are not something us Apostles need to take part in.”

An Apostle is given power to destroy the enemies of god.

Thus, there was no meaning in obtaining fame and wealth. Simply destroying the enemy was their *raison d’être*. If there is no enemy to defeat, then there is no meaning for an Apostle to be there.

The Pandora continent did not have any more areas with strength that might require the intervention of more Apostles.

Even if they were like robbers, both the parliament and the church believe that they should just conquer it with overwhelming numbers.

In fact, the number of applicants was big enough to make the strength in Arc continent to become insufficient.

If there is going to be a shortage in the Republic due to the army driven by greed, then the Apostles will have to protect the peace here.

“The wounded Lord Sariel will certainly take about 1 month to recuperate but, since there are no threats there is no need for her to take any hardships either. All she has to do is just stay there as the supreme commander of the Crusaders. There would be no problem even if she doesn’t move.”

“But——“

Before Misa could raise her voice in objection again, the sound of hands striking with a *pan* sound interrupted her.

“ufufu, if you are that worried about Sariel-chan then how about we go and meet her.”

As if suggesting visiting a friend, the one who spoke in this gentle voice was the 3rd Apostle Mikael.

With wavy platinum-blond super long hair, just looking at her gentle gaze with amethyst like eyes, gave a sense of relief and calmness.

She had an overwhelmingly huge chest, slender neck, round hips and long plump legs. A voluptuous body line, which could be clearly seen even from above the pure white habit that she wore.

Her figure overflowed with loveliness, and everyone who saw her felt that she gave off the divine feeling similar to the goddess of harvest of ancient times or the mother earth herself.

Mikael, thinking that she just gave a great idea, with a smiling face, looked beautiful and neat worthy of being called the [Holy woman].

“Wait, I wasn’t particularly worried about Sariel but——“(misa)

“I approve. If you are not worried then Lord Misa can stay here. It will be less noisy so I’m actually happy about it.”(mariabelle)

“Wh, Who said I was not going!? I was just worried as her eternal rival whether her skills had fallen or not! That’s it!”(misa)

Battles and fights between Apostles were forbidden but looking at Misa it only felt like a children’s fight, so Abel decided not to say anything.

“In the first place, Mariabelle doesn’t have any significant relationship with Sariel right?”(misa)

“Don’t say my name so familiarly, and what do you mean by I don’t have any relationship, huh!?”(mariabelle)

“I am her rival; you’re just a fellow Apostle.”(misa)

“Are you kidding me, that’s not—“(mariabelle)

True, was something he couldn’t say in the end. He held abnormal feelings for Sariel but, that doesn’t mean he had any special relationship with her.

Once, he had entered a battle led by Ars, who had yet to become a Cardinal, along with his brother Liuchrome to fight against heretics.

In that battle, the Apostle dispatched by the church was Sariel.

No matter how you looked at it she was just a comrade-in-arms. In the first place, if you can call her a comrade just by fighting together once, then all 15,000 Crusaders were also her comrades.

“No way……I am……”(T/N: Mariabelle uses boku to refer to himself.)

“fufun” (misa)

Mariabelle was worried about his one-sided feelings, and for some reason Misa looked as if she had won something.

“This is the first time I’m going to the Pandora continent. I wonder

what kind of place it is?”

Mikael was in her own pace, already in a travelling mood.

Looking at these three, Abel made tired face. Although his face couldn't really be seen since he was wearing the hood.

“—Anyway, I won't forbid personally going to meet Lord Sarel, all of you act as per your own judgement. With this the discussion is over. Disperse.”

After giving the dispersal order, Abel stood up from his seat.

Since he had said what he wanted to say, he had no reason to stay here anymore. Mikael, Misa, and Mariabelle can do whatever they want.

The 4th and the 5th Apostle who had been quiet from the start till end, also stood up. The silver knight dressed in armor from head to toe was the 5th Apostle Johann

He was the commander of the [Temple Knights] to which the 1st cavalry unit, that dealt the finishing blow to the Daidalos army during the skirmish at Goldran, were affiliated to.

The 2m tall body covered in full body armour sitting on the chair looked like a piece of art.

The other, wearing a robe similar to Abel and a hood that was even thicker through which no expression could be seen, was 4th Apostle Judah.

Nobody knew what his work was, and Apostles below the number 5, let alone his powers, did not even know how he actually looked like. He was an extremely mysterious person.

The 2nd, 4th, and 5th Apostle whose faces could not be seen soon left, and the three who wanted to meet Sarel were left.

The scene of Mikael looking at Misa and Mariabelle, who were quarrelling, with saint like smile, was like a teacher looking at her troublesome pupils.

The Daidalos royal castle that was even enormous than the Virginia fort, in one section of this castle was a special room.

Originally, it was a giant basement warehouse, but currently a large magic circle was drawn on the cold stone ground, and priest in white robes stood at the four corners. And in the centre was pure white coffin.

One month after this room was created after the occupation of Daidalos. The light of the light illuminating the inside of the room slowly flickered. Other than the occasional tired sighs of the priests that were using magic continuously in rotation, there was no other sound inside the room. But at this moment, the change they were waiting for finally occurred.

—*bashari*

The sound of water came from inside the coffin.

basha *basha* the sound of water striking and moving came twice, thrice. The 4 priests made sure than they were not hallucinating due to overworking themselves.

Quickly as the priests left the room, 2 sisters entered the room to replace them.

One of them held a towel, and the other held a robe. Both things were pure white without a single stain.

As the two of them came closer, the door of the coffin was opened.

Two white arms came out. The hands gripped the coffin and slowly raised the body.

The naked body of the girl wet with the holy water kept in the coffin appeared.

Drops of water fell from the long silver hair; the two red eyes opened, and looked at the 2 sisters in front of her.

The 2 sisters were supposed to call out to the girl who came out of the coffin first, but this was the first time the two of them had ever

seen the girl directly and forgot their own duty due to the beauty that was loved by God and had their breath taken away.

What they saw was the unwounded naked body of the white girl.

After the fight with Gaevinal, the 7th Apostle Sariel had supposedly lost an arm and had sustained major wounds, but there was not even a single scar on her body right now. In this one month, inside the coffin filled with holy water, Sariel's wounds had been completely healed.

“.....How long was I passed out?”

Sariel asked.

It was her usual small voice, but that was enough for the two sisters to regain their composure.

“Today is the 12th day of the month of New Sun (Shinyou). It has been 36 days since you slept.”

“I see.”

She listened to the current state of affairs from the sister with the robe as her body was dried by the sister with the towel.

“It seems a bit troublesome situation.”

“Yes, not long ago, the prime minister of Daidalos committed suicide in the throne room——“

Listening to the sister, she wore the robe and became the usual pure white figure.

“Now then, Archbishop Liuchrome is waiting for you, please come this way.”

The sister starts leading her there.

And Sariel's footsteps, which were following the sister, were steady enough that no one would think that she was asleep for a month.”

("My body is stiff.....right arm cannot be used for atleast one week in battle.")

As she felt the inconsistencies in her body, she decided to go outside the castle for rehabilitation and inspection.